



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**African Burial Ground**  
**National Monument**

**Public Affairs Office**  
**210 New York Avenue**  
**Staten Island, NY 10305**

**718-354-4606 phone**  
**718-354-4605 fax**

---

## **African Burial Ground   News Release**

**Contact:**                      Tara Morrison

**Phone number:**            718- 354- 4523

**Date:**                         August 7, 2006

### **African Burial Ground Moves Forward With Selection of Interpretive Center Designers**

Maria Burks, Commissioner of the National Parks of New York Harbor, has announced the selection of two firms who will complete the work on the African Burial Ground Interpretive Center, part of the African Burial Ground National Monument in Manhattan. When completed in 2008, the center will provide opportunities to learn about the free and enslaved Africans who lived and worked in Manhattan and were interred in the 17th and 18th century African Burial Ground. The center will also acknowledge the civic movement credited with preserving the site and making its significance known, as well as its continuing relevance to today's society.

Roberta Washington Architects of Manhattan was selected by the National Park Service (NPS) to complete the architectural design. Amaze Design, Inc of Boston was awarded the contract to create the interpretive media for the center after extensive consultation with subject matter experts.

“The National Park Service looks forward to working with the selected firms, the technical advisors, the General Services Administration (GSA) and the public as we move forward with the development of a center that is worthy of the African Burial Ground and honors the contributions of the Africans who lived, worked and died in New York City,” commented Burks.

[\(more\)](#)

---

**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

The Amaze Design team includes a distinguished group of design professionals and several subject matter specialists with intimate knowledge of the African Burial Ground. These specialists include exhibit developer Sara Smith and exhibit designer Scott Rabiet who both worked on the visitor center for the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. Specialists also include Dr. Deborah Mack, a senior African American planner and an Africanist by training; Dr. Sherrill Wilson, former director of the African Burial Ground Office of Public Education and Interpretation; and Dr. Jean Howson, former African Burial Ground Associate Director for Archaeology. Madison Davis Lacy of Firethorn Productions will serve as the filmmaker.

Roberta Washington, FAIA, Principal, and John Samuels, Project Manager, will lead the Roberta Washington Architects team; both are members of National Organization of Minority Architects. Hardie & Associates Consulting Engineers will provide the mechanical, electrical and plumbing designs for the center, with Gedeon Engineering providing the structural and civil engineering.

“The National Park Service is pleased to have the opportunity to work with distinguished advisors throughout the development of the interpretive center,” noted Burks. “We are grateful to all who have given their time and expertise and brought us to the point where we can now launch the effort to complete the African Burial Ground Interpretive Center.” Those who have previously contributed to the development efforts and who will advise the NPS during the interpretive center development include Dr. Michael Blakey, College of William and Mary; Dr. T.J. Davis, Arizona State University; Dowoti Desir, former African Burial Ground Memorial advisor; Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and former Chairman of the African Burial Ground Federal Steering Committee; and Fath Davis Ruffins, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

The development of the new interpretive center is part of the General Services Administration’s continuing commitment to assist the National Park Service as the NPS works to complete the African Burial Ground National Monument. Through previous GSA efforts, construction of the memorial is underway and scientific and history studies have been completed.

The African Burial Ground Interpretive Center will be located in the Ted Weiss Federal Building at 290 Broadway. It is expected to open in 2008.